

**Submission  
No 142**

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING PROCESS IN NEWCASTLE  
AND THE BROADER HUNTER REGION**

**Name:** Mr George Southern

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21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2014

The Director

Select Committee on the Planning Process in Newcastle

Newcastle Rail Line.

For some time now there have been moves to terminate the rail at Wickham. The Hunter Development Cooperation being one of the proponents. Its catchcry being "open the harbour to the people". What has happened in fact is that a wall of units and hotels have alienated the harbour. There are two new developments in Hunter St which will rely on the rail. The new courthouse and legal precinct has little parking but it will attract many people. It is less than 200 metres from Civic Rail Station. The University is building its new City Campus less than 100 metres from Civic Station. We are told that it will accommodate over 3000 students.

The investigations by ICAC have shown how developers have tried to influence decisions about the rail closure. The sad state of affairs is that they seem to be succeeding. After ICAC completed its investigation we had the Minister for Transport announce that the trains would stop running on Boxing Day with no mention on what would replace them. A few days after the closure many Newcastle residents will be looking for transport to watch the New Years Eve fireworks display. Since the Minister for Transport's statement we have heard the Minister for Planning announce that it would be necessary to sell some railway land. One would have thought that the sale of the Port of Newcastle would make this unnecessary.

The developers seem to be amused by the outcome of their efforts so far. (see attachment)

Yours faithfully

G. W. Southern